



NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION

# News on NEPHTS

An Update on the Nevada Environmental Public Health Tracking System (NEPHTS)

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## Issue 1

January 2004

## THE FIRST ISSUE!

Welcome!

This forum was established to keep Nevada Planning Consortium Members and others informed about the NEPHTS program between Consortium meetings. We hope to publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis.

We would like to thank our Consortium members for participating in the Nevada Planning Consortium, and for their continued support in our efforts to develop an environmental public health tracking network. As we continue our efforts in 2004, we would like to encourage you to bring new members to Consortium meetings, who you feel would have an impact on the decisions in producing a state-wide network.

If you would like to share an interesting article related to the NEPHTS program in this publication, please send it to Maryanna Moyer, Education & Information Officer.

Please be sure to check out our newly developed website: [www.healthtrack.nv.gov](http://www.healthtrack.nv.gov) for the newest information on Nevada Environmental Public Health Tracking.

Thank you for your support!

## Linking: Hazards, Exposures & Health Effects



## Closing the Environmental Public Health Information Gap

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

- February 19th

Next Consortium Meeting  
State Library & Archives Building  
Carson City, Nevada

- April 14-16

National Asthma Conference  
Atlanta, Georgia

- March 23-26

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Conference  
Philadelphia, PA





Through successful partnerships with the environmental health authorities in Clark County and the University of Nevada Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies, and the University of California-Berkeley, Center of Excellence for Environmental Public Health Tracking, the Nevada Environmental Public Health Tracking System (NEPHTS) developed the design and is in the process of implementing a pilot project to link and integrate asthma hospital discharge data with the air pollution data in Clark county.

Successful partnering with Clark county environmental public health provided this realistic opportunity to link three dissimilar “disparate,” but uniform and reliable data sets that will help the EPHTS conducting the first integrated **surveillance system around asthma**.

The project will enable the EPHTS to provide an accurate and valid description of this very prevalent respiratory disease entity in areas related to air quality, human exposure to air pollutants and the development, and/or exacerbation of asthma. EPHTS will analyze, interpret and represent these integrated but apparently unrelated datasets and will provide meaningful conclusions (or at least inferences) regarding asthma disease determinant/s in Clark County.

The pilot project will utilize the Geographic Information System (GIS) to link the following three data systems:

- **Health Outcome Data** regarding asthma from the hospital discharge, emergency room, and urgent care centers utilization.
- **Health Hazard Data** regarding air pollutants from the air quality monitoring stations in Clark County.
- **Human Exposure to Air Pollutants Spatial Data** will be ascertained by utilizing census information assuming that populations residing in areas with bad air quality are/will be involuntarily exposed. EPHTS will utilize zip codes, census tracts and buffering zones to relate specific human exposures to already identified air qualities. Communities and individuals exposed to polluted air will be described by age, gender, race, insurance, address, income, education etc.

This pilot project will create a model that will be very helpful to provide a template for surveillance around several other chronic diseases and conditions.

**For more information about this project please contact:  
Ihsan Azzam, MPH, M.D, NEPHTS Program Manager**

**NEPHTS:**  
*Making  
successful  
community  
partnerships*

Coming Soon!

Washoe County District Health Department receives a grant to promote the environment as a disease determinant.

[illegible]

## Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH)

As part of NEPHTS, the Carson City Community was identified as a volunteer community to implement the Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health (PACE-EH).

The PACE-EH will help the Carson City Community:

- Take an active role through the entire community-based environmental health assessment plans
- Characterize and evaluate local environmental health conditions and concerns
- Identify populations at risk of exposure to environmental hazards
- Identify and collect relevant data on environmental hazards, exposure to those hazards, and related health effects
- Prioritize local action to address environmental health problems

By engaging in the PACE-EH, the Carson City Community will have an opportunity to explore the following issues:

- Connections between the environment – where we live, work, learn, and play – and human health and wellbeing
- Environmental injustice (e.g., Are certain groups in the community currently experiencing an increased risk of adverse health effects due to environmental hazard exposure?)
- Protection of human health and the environment
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of current environmental health protection measures in the community
- Preservation or protection of important environmental resources

For further information, please feel free to contact:

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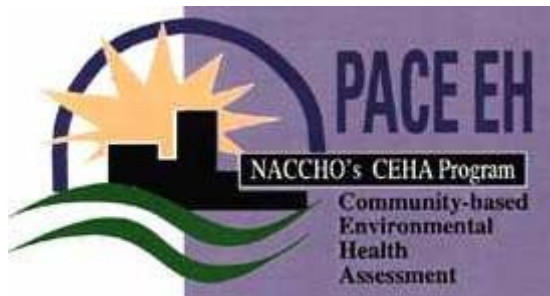
E-mail: [miki@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:miki@unr.nevada.edu)

### RESOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). June 2002.

Programs in Brief: PACE-EH: A tool for Community Environmental Health Assessment [Online].

***“The PACE-EH  
assessment  
process  
provides a place  
to start in the  
development of  
a public health  
leadership role  
within the  
environmental  
health arena”  
-PACE-EH Field  
Coordinator,  
PACE-EH  
Guidebook***



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We're on the Web!  
[www.healthtrack.nv.gov](http://www.healthtrack.nv.gov)



**Linking: Hazards, Exposures & Health Effects**

**Environmental Public Health Tracking:**

**What is CDC doing?**

In addition to funding states to develop a statewide environmental public health tracking network, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is also closely working with state grantee personnel to develop and implement this exciting new program. Under the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) and the Environmental Public Health Tracking Branch, CDC has developed workgroups and numerous sub-workgroups to help solve and answer many of the questions that remain unanswered regarding health outcome linkages, definition of exposures, health policy and communication. Each of the state grantees are encouraged to participate in weekly, monthly or quarterly conference calls associated with each of the workgroups. The Nevada Environmental Public Health Tracking System (NEPHTS) Leadership Team participates on all four of the established workgroups:

**Program Marketing Workgroup:** This workgroup was established to help CDC clarify, communicate and promote the purpose, goals, objectives and timelines of the National EPHT Program. Maryanna Moyer, Education and Information Officer participates on this workgroup. Maryanna works for the Bureau of Community Health, Nevada State Health Division and can be reached at (775) 684-5957 or [mmoyer@nvhd.state.nv.us](mailto:mmoyer@nvhd.state.nv.us).

**Legislation and Partnership Agreements Workgroup:** This workgroup was developed to address health policy and legislative issues that individual state grantees may have when linking and/or sharing health or environmental data in establishing a network. Through the hard work and effort of the participants, this workgroup has produced two pieces of helpful information for state grantees. Edward Foster, Environmental Scientist III for the Nevada Department of Agriculture participates on this workgroup. Ed can be reached at (775) 688-1182 ext 272 or [efoster@agri.state.nv.us](mailto:efoster@agri.state.nv.us).

**Standardization and Network Development (SND) Workgroup:** This workgroup is devoted to facilitate and promote CDC and other partners in the development of the Network as it relates to Network functions, requirements, and data and information technology specifications. Among other tasks, the SND workgroup has developed a workplan to tackle their most difficult technological and data issues. Randel Stevens, Information Systems Project Manager for the Nevada Department of Information Technology (DOIT) participates on this workgroup and chairs a subgroup. Randel can be reached at (775) 684-7322 or [rstevens@doit.nv.gov](mailto:rstevens@doit.nv.gov).

**Data Linkages Workgroup:** This workgroup was designed to compile and share lessons learned in linking health, environmental hazard, and exposure data. Made up of mostly epidemiologists and health experts, this workgroup has helped identify key health outcomes for the national program which are: asthma, birth defects, pesticide use, lead poisoning and cancer. Subgroups on all five health outcomes have developed key studies and identified exposures to hazards and the health outcomes that could result. Ihsan Azzam, EPHTS program manager for the Nevada State Health Division participates on this workgroup. Ihsan can be reached at (775) 684-5901 or [iaz-zam@nvhd.stat.nv.us](mailto:iaz-zam@nvhd.stat.nv.us).

**Review of Technologies Workgroup:** This workgroup was designed to learn about software and hardware as well as issues involved in selecting appropriate products, and to provide information that is useful in making decisions in the context of the EPHT Network. Currently, their priorities are: data warehousing, data mining, database capabilities and third party products for data extraction and transmission, data analysis and Geographic Information Systems. The University of California Berkley, Center for Environmental Public Health Tracking is working closely with state grantees on this project. Kathleen Fox-Williams, Environmental Scientist III for the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection participates on this workgroup. Kathleen can be reached at (775) 687-9361 or [kfox@ndep.nv.gov](mailto:kfox@ndep.nv.gov)